

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

APRIL 18, 2005

AUSTIN'S FOOD HANDLER EXEMPTION BILL PASSED BY HOUSE

INDIANAPOLIS – Today, a food handler exemption bill, co-authored by State Rep. Terri Austin (D-Anderson), was passed by the Indiana House of Representatives on a vote of 72-11.

Currently, nonprofit organizations are included in food handler laws, making it difficult for them to serve food and beverages. Austin reported that many service clubs would have been negatively impacted by the proposed changes to the Department of Health rules but House Bill 1056 will exempt these nonprofit organizations from the laws.

"In the past, food pantries, church picnics, and other community festivals where food is served have faced challenges because of the existing food handler laws," said Austin. "This legislation would exempt these groups from having to follow the strict guidelines, which are really meant more for restaurants and other formal eating establishments."

Last fall, Austin was contacted by Bobbie Young, a member of the Frankton Lions Club, with concerns about the new regulations. Young realized the club's traditional fundraising method of selling food at local festivals would require a certified food handler at all future events.

The bill will now be sent to the Governor for consideration and will be put into effect retroactively. That is, food handler penalties imposed on nonprofit organizations will be removed upon the passage of the legislation.